



Meeting Notes

Tree & Resources Focus Group Meeting

4:00 p.m. – Monday, July 6, 2009

Council Conference Room, 211 West Aspen Ave, Flagstaff, AZ

1. Welcome and Introductions

In attendance:

Mark Sawyers, City of Flagstaff
Neil Gullickson, City of Flagstaff
Vince Knaggs, City of Flagstaff
Tish Bogan-Ozman, Real Estate
Marilyn Weissman, Friends of Flagstaff Future
Karen Goodwin, Citizen
Joe Loverich, Citizen
Kim Tittelbaugh, Citizen
Mark Brehl, City of Flagstaff
Mark Spinti, Citizen
Steve Nelson, Citizen (Chair)
Roger Eastman, City of Flagstaff
Kent Hotsenpiller, Engineer
Ed Larsen, City of Flagstaff
Christine Laguna, Citizen
Paul Jones, Citizen
Tom Bean, Citizen
Georgia Duncan, Citizen
Dan Burke, Citizen
Ron Hohlfeld, Citizen

2. Focus Group Overview

Steve Nelson, Chair, opened the meeting and invited comment on general issues regarding the Trees/Resources Focus Group. It was suggested that grassland areas and other native vegetation in Flagstaff should also be considered as a resource to be protected.

3. Roles/expectations of the Focus Groups

Quick overview by the Chair.

4. General comments:

- Item #1: Maintain naturally functioning eco-systems

General discussion on the following topics;

- Also include grasslands as a resource that needs to be preserved as grasslands are a natural environment providing open space and support for wildlife. Consider grassland as equally as important as the preservation of trees.
- Expand resources to include wildlife corridors and linkages, water, natural vegetation types. We would have to define standards for each type of vegetation – for example, oaks are smaller than 6” and need a different standard.
- The expanded definition of resources (e.g. grasslands) is important in the PRAs where there is more open land than forest
- USFS has a list of what native plants should be in Flagstaff. This could be used as a guide or standard to rehabilitate an area that has been disturbed or overrun with exotic species. This is more of a Landscape Focus Group issue.
- Question: How does the current LDC apply resources to a site that does not have tree resources? The Landscape Surface Ratio (LSR) open space requirement applies if there are no tree/slope/floodplain resources on a site. Essentially this creates private open space within a new development.
- Using LSR or an equivalent, we can achieve the protection of other resources like grasslands and oaks
- Currently a site is designed to match the code without necessarily thinking about how best to use the resources on a site – frequently results in not poor site design and does not always result in the best resources being preserved. Would do better to evaluate the resources on a site and designing with them.
- Need to educate about wildlife – but wildlife is not appropriate everywhere (transect based again!) Wildlife education is not a zoning code issue.
Russ Balder – NAU ornithologist – local expert on birds in Flagstaff
- Should safeguards for oversight be added where appropriate to ensure that what is required by the code translates to the ground – expectation of what is wanted is actually achieved. Staff response – oversight is already there through inspectors, planners, etc.
In term of developing the new zoning code, the issue is really about testing of the new regulations compared to the existing one. And the need for simpler codes to achieve desired results. Code needs specific objectives – what do we want to achieve through resource preservation?
- Suggestion that the City should maintain land as open space and should accept land offered to it. Subdivision platting process also deals with this – private open space within new projects. *I think this is more of a policy issue – not a zoning code issue. Encourage more public access to open space – policy.*

- Wildlife – talk to Sara Reif at Game and Fish. Use habitat preservation tools to protect wildlife – wildlife corridors along washes and drainages. Manage development to provide appropriate connected habitats for wildlife to ensure it is protected.

Specific discussion on the issues listed under the desire to maintain naturally functioning ecosystems.

- Especially important in outlying areas of the City and T1 through T3
Consensus on this issue – but ensure that T4 and T5 areas incorporate as much natural elements as possible, especially with regard to drainage design – use natural channels where feasible.
- In T4 through T5 because of its urban character, less tree resources will be preserved (actually inevitably all will be removed – See TND ordinance) and it is OK to find other solutions for drainages other than open natural channels.
Consensus on this issue, but do what is possible to bring as much naturally functioning ecosystems into these areas. Where feasible have open channel naturally functioning and more pleasing in all areas.
- Find a simpler more effective approach than we have now
 - Balance forest resources with site capacity calculations
 Consensus on both issues
- Look at the quality of trees and other native vegetation and their location rather than the quantity of trees
 - Preserve some small trees under (6”) as well as large trees to create healthier ecosystems
 - Consolidate preserved trees as a cluster of trees so that those preserved on one parcel are contiguous with those on an adjacent parcel or open space areas – also use drainages.
 - Ensure that credit is provided for trees disturbed or removed in drainage easements. Under the current rules, there is no incentive for creating a natural channel – allow flexibility in the design parameters to allow a more natural channel to flow around existing trees.
 - Creates better wildlife habitat areas and the potential for greater diversity – connectivity of open space/habitat areas is important.
 Consensus on all issues.
- Preservation and protection during construction and post-construction is very important
 - Maintain the integrity of all natural resources (grasslands, trees, native vegetation, slopes, floodplains, etc.)
 - Ensure that FFD and others are involved in decision making with CD staff

- Need for consistency between city codes – this is an issue comprehensively addressed by the Process and Procedures Focus Group.
 - Very important to emphasize the need for corridors – wildlife, resources, view sheds, walkability, ecological connectivity.
 - Also keep in mind slope resources as an important amenity to preserve. Consensus on all issues.
- Item #4: Daylighting stream-beds
 - Rural flood plains are mapped by the City and are therefore protected
 - Design guidelines encourage natural channels – but there is a need for real incentives to do this and make it easier to sell to a developer
 - The issue of daylighting existing covered channels is a policy issues that will be forwarded to the Regional Plan group

This topic led to a further discussion on the importance of preserving drainage channels in the City.

- Rural floodplains (i.e. FEMA 100 year flood plain designation) are mapped in the LDC and are permanently protected. A LOMR (Letter of Map Revision) etc. cannot be used to redesignate a rural floodplain.
- However, urban floodplains and channels do not have the same level of protection and may be subject to change, and may be channelized, culverted, etc.
- Need real incentives to protect the channels that have not been mapped in the urban floodplains

NOTE: This moved items #1 and #4 as discussed on July 6th to the resolved column and future meetings will then work on the mitigation and other issues.

5. Future meetings:
Next meeting will be July 20, 2009 @ 4:00 pm, Council Conference room.
6. Adjournment
5:35 p.m.